



PEI Federation of Labour Newsletter August 2006 Issue

Current News

- ❑ On Friday, November 3 and Saturday, November 4, the PEI Federation of Labour will hold its 42nd annual convention at the Howard Johnson's Dutch Inn in North River. The following positions will be up for election at convention: President, Secretary, and VP (women). If your local wishes to submit a resolution to convention please contact our office at 368-3068; fax at 368-3192 or e-mail at: peifed@pei.aibn.com. The deadline for resolutions will be October 4, 2005.

- ❑ Recently, the PEI Federation of Labour received a request from Elmer MacFadyen, Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs announcing that effective December 31, 2006, the terms of 2 worker representatives on the Workers Compensation Board of Directors, will expire and requesting that we submit names for those positions. In the letter, the Minister asks the federation to indicate why we believe our nominees would be good candidates as Board members. Therefore, If you have any members interested in being considered as nominees for these positions, we ask you to submit their name, phone number, address, and a short list of any training, experience, and/or positions held that shows interest and experience in workers compensation and health and safety issues. Submit nominations by email at: peifed@pei.aibn.com; by Fax at: 368-3192. The deadline for nominations will be before 4:30pm on Wednesday, October, 25, 2006.

- ❑ On Saturday, September 9, 2006, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI for August was 10.9% down 0.3% from July's 11.2%. You currently need 525 hours to qualify for EI on PEI.

- ❑ On Tuesday, September 5, 2006, the Federation will be donating books, CD's, and DVD's, dealing with labour and social issues to the Provincial and UPEI libraries. The value of this year's donation will be approximately \$1000. Recently, the Federation sent out notices of this campaign to each of our affiliates asking them to donate \$50.00 to the Adopt-A-Book Fund. We feel that making sure that the general public has access to this information is very important. Last year, thanks to the generosity of many of our affiliates and their national bodies, the federation was able to donate approximately

\$2300 worth of materials. If your Local wishes to donate to this campaign, please send a cheque payable to the PEI Federation of Labour (memo Adopt A Book Fund) to our office at 22 Enman Crescent, Charlottetown, PEI, C1E1E6. Thus far, we would like to thank CUPE PEI Division, CUPE Local 501, CUPE Local 1870, UPSE, and CUPW for their generous donations.

-□ On Tuesday, August 29, it was announced that Natural and Organic Food Group, Inc in a joint venture with PEI Pork Plus has signed a purchase agreement to buy the Garden Province Meats facility in Charlottetown. Immediately, NOFG is making an initial investment in upgrading the plant's technology to increase production efficiencies and output. It is expected that NOFG will maintain current levels of plant employment and create new job opportunities over time. Natural and Organic Food Group Inc., established in 2004 and headquartered in Quebec City, is a leader in the production, processing and distribution of organic and other niche meat and poultry products. The pork produced at the plant will be branded under PEI Natural, PEI Organic and PEI Omega 3, trademarks owned by Natural and Organic Food Group Inc.

□ On Thursday, August 24, it was announced by Statistics Canada that the level of Canadian women earning more than their husbands rose to 29% in 2003 compared to 11% in 1967. This means that 4.7 million Canadian women were the primary breadwinner at the time the latest StatsCan survey was conducted. The agency also says that there is a trend toward lower pay among women who are primary earners, a finding that extends across all professions. Women who were the main family breadwinners earned \$41,200 in 2003, significantly below the level of \$57,800 for men who were also primary breadwinners. A significant salary gap between men and women breadwinners was also found in managerial positions. Women earned \$68,000 on average compared to \$83,000 for men.

□ On Wednesday, August 23, it was announced that The Federal Court of Canada has issued a landmark ruling ordering the federal government to make professional sign language interpretation services available on request when providing services to persons who are deaf or affected by a loss of hearing. The case was filed by the Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD) on behalf of four individuals. Lawyers argued in court that the individuals were denied the services of sign language interpreters during access to the policy development process. They also lost opportunities to contract with the federal government and were unable to participate in the Statistics Canada labour force survey, the court was told.

□ On Friday, August 18, it was announced that Manitoba is developing a policy to ensure the clothing it buys for government employees won't be made in sweatshops. If adopted, Manitoba would become the first province in Canada to vote in a No Sweat Policy.

Similar policies are in place in 13 municipalities including Vancouver, Calgary, and Toronto, 13 universities and 7 school boards in Canada. On PEI, the town of Souris has a No Sweat Policy. Manitoba spends an average of \$1.6 million a year on clothing, including uniforms for security guards, prison guards and natural resources officers, as well as clothing for inmates at provincial jails, and safety clothing such as work gloves and lab coats. The policy will go into effect sometime this fall. When the policy does go into effect, it is expected to contain strong requirements for clothing suppliers to disclose the names and locations of the factories where their product is produced. The suppliers will also need to ensure that these factories comply with the labour laws and accords of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

□ On Thursday, August 17, it was announced that the Supreme Court of Canada has decided it will not hear an appeal from PEI's Provincial Government to the Supreme Court of P.E.I.'s ruling which called the Province's cap on compensation for political discrimination unconstitutional. The case goes back to 1996, when the Pat Binns government was first elected and an estimated 800 to 900 provincial employees with Liberal party affiliations lost their jobs. The province then put a cap on the amount of compensation it would pay to those workers, most accepted deals based on the cap but 11 challenged that cap in court. This decision raises some questions about those deals, since the settlements were based on a formula within legislation that is now confirmed as unconstitutional. The province has now exhausted all its legal options and now it must either negotiate settlements with the 11 public employees who are fighting the landmark discrimination case against the province or send their cases back to the Human Rights Commission for hearings. The Supreme Court also awarded full legal costs to those 11 workers.

□ On Wednesday, August 16, it was announced that the province will draft a new name tag policy for nurses in continuing care facilities after a ruling by Karen Rose, P.E.I.'s acting freedom of information and privacy commissioner that a nurse in a long-term care facility should not be required to display her full name, because doing so could pose an immediate personal risk.

□ On Friday, August 11, it was announced that the P.E.I. Nurses Union have reached a tentative collective agreement with the province. The agreement includes an 8.75 % wage increase over the three-year contract, retroactive to April 1, 2005. The deal also includes: top up benefits to EI for maternity and parental leave, new compensation for senior nurses who mentor new nurses, improved employer contributions to the nurses' education fund, and a first description of the role of nurse practitioners. A ratification vote is expected in mid-September. If ratified, the deal will run until March 31, 2008.

□ On Friday, August 11, it was announced that Island radio station Magic 93 has launched

an online petition calling on the province to make the first Monday in August a paid holiday as it is in most provinces in Canada. The Federation has been for some time now calling on the province to increase the number of statutory holidays on PEI. PEI is tied with Nova Scotia and Newfoundland for having the lowest number of statutory holidays in Canada at 6. In the 6 provinces outside the Atlantic Region, 3 (Que., Ont., and Man.) have 8 and 3 (Sask., Alberta, and B.C.) have 9 statutory holidays. New Brunswick has 7 and observes the August holiday. The petition is available at <http://www.magic93.pe.ca>.

□ On Friday, August 4, it was announced that The P.E.I. government is loaning Ocean Group Inc., a Quebec towing company nearly \$4 million so it can purchase two new tugboats from East Isle Shipyard in Georgetown. Ocean is the principal provider of towing services in the Port of Quebec, but also carries out maritime services throughout Canada. The total value of the contract is more than \$18 million. East Isle Shipyard employs about 130 employees and has an annual payroll of about \$10 million.

Labour Day Message from PEI Federation of Labour President Carl Pursey 2006

-On Friday, September 1, 2006, PEI Federation of Labour President, Carl Pursey released his 2006 Labour Day Message. Here it is:

A Time to Reflect on Our Accomplishments Yet Realize Much Is Left to Do.

-As the labour movement heads towards Labour Day 2006 in a year that marks the 50 anniversary of our parent organization the Canadian Labour Congress, the PEI Federation of Labour asks its approximately 10,000 affiliated members and indeed all workers on PEI to reflect on what a difference unions have made in people's lives!

-Over the span of two generations, Canadian Unions have worked diligently to improve the everyday lives of not only our members but all Canadian workers.

-Many of the benefits that were first bargained for in collective agreements one workplace at a time are now enjoyed by all Canadians and their families. In fact, they have become so much a part of everyday life that most of us simply take them for granted.

-Thus, today Canadians enjoy the security of the Canada Pension Plan, overtime and holiday pay, and universal public medicare.

-The same is true for laws promoting health and safety in the workplace, including the

right to refuse dangerous work. Laws to protect people against harassment and discrimination, maternity and parental leaves, student loans and, most recently, protection against bankruptcy - all won through the political action of a united labour movement.

-We have changed our society and our country for the better. Our workplaces are safer. Our families are healthier. Our incomes are more secure. Canadians enjoy a quality of life and an equality of citizenship that is admired the world over.

-Although we have gained much there is much more left to do and we must stay vigilant to defend what we have gained. We know there are those with power and influence who want to turn back the clock and remove all of the gains that the Canadian labour movement has made.

In the last year,

- We have seen the Harper Government put the brakes on the birth of a National Child Care and Early Learning Program only to be replaced it with a so-called “Universal Child Care Plan” that provides a child care allowance and little else. It was especially disappointing for the PEI Federation of Labour to see Premier Binns be one of the few Premiers to actually come out in support of this major step backwards for Canadian families.
- We have seen one of Canada’s greatest assets our Public Health Care System under increasing attack from those whose main goal is to profit off our illness and move our health care system to one based on ability to pay rather than need.
- And we have seen Atlantic Canada’s business elite meet in Saint John to discuss their goal of creating an integrated cross-border economic region, to be called Atlantica. In order to reach this the proponents of Atlantica wish to remove or limit the things that they feel are barriers to business and trade i.e. social programs such as EI, minimum wage regulations and other labour standards, public services, public health care, and the right to unionize among others.

-So as we reflect on what we have accomplished in the past this Labour Day, we must also look to and plan for what we must do to insure a future we can be proud of. In order to do this, we must again remind our elected officials that they work for us and that:

- Working people need access to quality, universal, and affordable child care and early learning for our kids.
- We need them to be concentrating our health care resources on strengthening and

expanding our public health care system not wasting them on public-private partnerships and contracting out which have been shown in study after study to cost more in the long run, and lead to a decline in the standard of health care.

- And when they go to negotiate trade deals that the social programs, the labour standards, the occupational health and safety legislation, and the public services that unions have worked so hard to create are not sacrificed in the name of corporate greed.

-In the end, as working people we need to reassert the power we have as citizens by making sure the issues that concern us are vote-determining and making sure that we vote for those candidates who will champion those issues. We do have the power to make our elected officials hear us. Now more than ever, it is time that we used that power.

-Finally, I would also like to remind all Islanders that the PEI Federation of Labour would like to invite you to come celebrate Labour Day with us at our Seventh Annual Picnic on Monday September 4th between 4-6 pm at Victoria Park, Charlottetown. There will be prizes, hot dogs, corn, children's games, and entertainment.

-(Please note: Due to rain on September 4, this year's Picnic was cancelled).

Things Coming Out of the Canadian Medical Association Meetings in Charlottetown

□ On Sunday to Tuesday, August 21 to 23, between 240 and 250 physicians attended the Canadian Medical Association's annual meeting at the Delta Hotel in Charlottetown. Among other things, the meeting featured a session looking at the state of health care in Canada and a review of the ongoing debate over the role that private health providers will play in the country's public health system. They were also there to elect a new president.

-Here are some of the other things that happened during the meeting:

The Protests

□ On Sunday, August 21, a public rally in Support of Public Health Care was held in the rain outside the Delta Hotel where the Canadian Medical Association was kicking off its annual meeting. Despite the rain, the rally attracted around 40 protesters.

□ On Monday and Tuesday, August 22 and 23, the PEI Health Coalition held vigils

outside the Delta Hotel also in support of our Public Health care system

□ On Monday, August 22, The Council of Canadians hosted a panel discussion on medicare together with some light entertainment in Charlottetown which attracted approximately 150 people . Panelists at the meeting included Michael McBane, national co-ordinator of the Canadian Health Coalition, Dr. Danielle Martin chair of Canadian Doctors for Medicare, Maude Bariow, chair of the Council of Canadians, and Linda Silas, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions. The main message that came out meeting was that Canadians must work hard to defend and fix our public healthcare system.

□ CLC Executive Vice President Barb Byers was in Charlottetown and attended the protests on Sunday and Monday.

The CMA Meetings

□ On Monday, August 22, Provincial Health Minister Chester Gillan announced at the Canadian Medical Association's annual meeting that while the need for private health care does not exist yet on P.E.I, he is willing to look at private options.

□ On Tuesday, August 23, delegates at the Canadian Medical Association meetings elected Dr. Brian Day as their new president. Dr. Day owns a private clinic in B.C. and has long been a vocal advocate of private health care (funded by public dollars) as a part of the overall public health care system. Dr. Day defeated Dr. Jack Burak , who presented himself as a defender of public health care. Dr. Day's one-year term begins in 2007.

□ During their meeting, delegates at the Canadian Medical Association annual meeting passed a series of motions which show a lack of support for Canada's public health-care system.

Their motions included:

- develop a policy framework to improve health-care access that includes a national human resources plan, national wait-time benchmarks, a wait-time guarantee supported by a publicly funded safety valve and a regulatory regime to best support the public private interface;
- request government remove bans that prevent MDs from practicing in both the public and private sectors;
- ensure that if there is an increase in private delivery and/or funding of health care, the quality of training for medical trainees will be maintained.

PEI Federation Of Labour Calls On Minister To Reconsider Policy On Tax Credits.

□ On Tuesday, August 8, the provincial government announced that it has decided not to offer tax credits to people buying into labour-sponsored investment funds, effectively closing the door on Halifax-based Growthworks Atlantic. The GrowthWorks Atlantic Venture Fund is jointly sponsored by the PEI Federation of Labour along with the other Federations of Labour in the other Atlantic provinces. Also PEI Federation of Labour President, Carl Pursey sits on the board of the fund. Every province except P.E.I. and Alberta offers tax credits to people buying into labour-sponsored investment funds.

□ In response to this on August 23, 2006, the Federation released the following press release:

□ Carl Pursey, President of the PEI Federation of Labour is asking Minister Mitch Murphy to review the PEI government's decision not to offer provincial tax credits to Island residents who invest in labour sponsored venture capital funds.

- "We are the only province in Atlantic Canada and only one of 2 provinces in all of Canada to not offer these tax credits" said Mr. Pursey.

- The PEI Federation of Labour along with its counterparts in each of the other Atlantic provinces agreed to sponsor the creation of a new venture capital fund devoted to investing in Atlantic Canadian companies in January of 2005. Mr. Pursey who sits on the board of GrowthWorks Atlantic Venture Fund Ltd says the Fund has been extremely active in making investments in the rest of Atlantic Canada. "Unfortunately the Fund cannot make investments in PEI companies because the PEI government won't provide tax credits to Island residents who invest in the fund".

- These tax credits are available in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador. "Having an adequate supply of venture capital available to Island entrepreneurs is one way of helping to diversify the PEI economy and we hope the Minister will agree to review his decision on this important issue", concluded Pursey.

□ The deadline for changing the tax forms to offer the tax credit this year was July 31, so even if the government was to reconsider, there will be no tax credits until at least 2007.

C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation of Labour Educational

□ The C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation will be holding a one day educational

at the Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn, Charlottetown, P.E.I. on Thursday, October 12, 2006 8:30 am - 5:00 pm (Lunch provided). The courses being offered are:

The Steward as Leader: Steward Training - Level 3

-The Steward As Leader highlights the basic leadership role of stewards in the local union and the responsibilities that this role entails in the face of a changing union and growing legislative responsibilities. The theme of this course is how to effectively build an union which is fair and inclusive for all members, what kind of commitments and strategies are required from the steward, the executive of the local and the union itself. Legislative responsibilities such as human rights and the duty of fair representation will be highlighted. The Steward As Leader is third in a series of CLC Stewards courses. Participants should already be well grounded in basic stewards training.

Mobilizing the Membership

-This 9 hour course deals with the very important issue of recruiting and maintaining - local union activists. Discussions focus on how we entice volunteers in our locals to become active, and how we keep them active. The course will also briefly examine how we work within the structure of the labour movement to achieve our goals; how we organize campaigns in our locals, and how we work with other groups, outside our local unions to get our message out. Participants will spend a little time as well perfecting some of the "tricks" used to prepare ourselves and our message for the public and our members.

Registration Information

-Please complete the attached form and send it before September 28, 2006 along with a cheque made payable to the P.E.I. Federation of Labour to cover the registration fee (\$35.00 per person which includes lunch on Thursday October 12, 2006) to:
Marjorie Gyurus, Registrar P.E.I. Federation of Labour, 22 Enman Crescent,
Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1E 1E6

-If you require additional information, please contact: Marjorie Gyurus at (902) 368-3068 or email: peifed@pei.aibn.com or Jean-Claude Basque at (506)-851-7086 or email: jcbasque@clc-ctc.ca.

Important Dates

Federation Book Donation to the Provincial and UPEI Libraries.	Tuesday, September 5, 2006	at 10:00 a.m. at the Confederation Centre Library
Press Conference for Federation's Municipal Campaign	Thursday, September 28, 2006	10:00 am at the Richmond Center (formerly Basilica Rec Center)
Deadline for Resolutions for the Federation's Convention	Wednesday, October 4, 2006	
The C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation Educational	Thursday, October 12, 2006 8:30 am - 5:00 pm	Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn Deadline for Registration Thursday, September 28, 2006
Deadline for Nominations for Worker Representatives on the Workers Compensation Board of Directors,	Wednesday, October, 25, 2006. Before 4:30pm	
PEIFL Annual Convention	Friday and Saturday November 3 and 4, 2006	Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn